DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 434 882 SP 038 817

AUTHOR Trumbull, Elise; Greenfield, Patricia; Quiroz, Blanca; Rothstein-Fisch, Carrie

TITLE Bridging Cultures: Evaluating Teachers' Understanding of Cross-Cultural Conflicts.

INSTITUTION Far West Lab. for Educational Research and Development, San Francisco, CA.

PUB DATE 1996-09-00
NOTE 17p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Conflict Resolution; *Cross Cultural Training; Cultural Awareness; *Cultural Differences; Diversity (Student); Elementary Secondary Education; *Faculty Development; Inservice Teacher Education; Problem Solving; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Improvement; Teachers

ABSTRACT

The Bridging Cultures Project is a collaboration among several researchers and teachers (n=8) to design professional development activities on the topic of cross-cultural understanding. During the fall of 1996, participating teachers will be given a pre-assessment and post-assessment. The assessments are designed to give some information on how teachers construe cross-culture conflicts before and after they participate in the program's professional development activities. Teachers read and comment upon brief scenarios depicting a problem situation that would likely be resolved differently, depending on the person's culture-based value system. Then, teachers are asked to imagine how a typical parent from a specific ethnic group might resolve the problem. Teachers' responses before and after the workshops will give insights into the effectiveness of the workshops and into the ways that attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge can be influenced. At the end of the pre-assessment session, teachers will complete a questionnaire that gives essential information about their education, teaching experience, and language background and the ethnic composition of their classrooms. This will be helpful in understanding the perspectives they bring to analyzing the scenarios on the pre- and post-assessments. The appendixes contain the Bridging Cultures pre-assessment, post-assessment, and participant questionnaire. (SM)

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Evaluating Teachers' Understanding of Cross-Cultural Conflicts

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September 1996

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Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development
730 Harrison Street, San Francisco, CA 94107-1242 (415) 565-3000

Bridging Cultures

Evaluating Teachers' Understanding of Cross-Cultural Conflicts

by

Elise Trumbull
WestEd

Patricia Greenfield
Blanca Quiroz
University of California, Los Angeles

Carrie Rothstein-Fisch
California State University, Northridge

ABSTRACT

Bridging Cultures:

Evaluating Teachers' Understanding of Cross-Cultural Conflicts

The Bridging Cultures Project brings together researchers from UCLA, California State University Northridge, WestEd, and eight teachers from five Los Angeles area schools to design professional development activities on the topic of cross-cultural understanding.

During the fall of 1996, participating teachers will be assessed on cross-cultural awareness both before and after a series of workshops conducted at UCLA by the staff of the project. Brief scenarios depicting a problem situation that would likely be resolved differently, depending on a person's culture-based value system are read and commented upon by the teachers. Then teachers are asked to imagine how a "typical Latino immigrant parent" or "typical Euro-American parent" would resolve the problem posed. Teachers' responses before and after the workshops will give insights into the effectiveness of the workshops and into the ways attitudes, perceptions and knowledge can be influenced.

Bridging Cultures:

Evaluating Teachers' Understanding of Cross-Cultural Conflicts

The Bridging Cultures project (described in a recent deliverable, "Professional Development Plan: Bridging Cultures") is a collaboration among several researchers and teachers. The aim of the project is to develop educational processes and products that support increased cross-cultural understanding in the classroom and between teachers and parents. Cross-cultural conflicts or dilemmas occur in classrooms because of the often unidentified differences between home and school cultures. They may occur at home because of the interplay between cultures of home and of the wider society. In addition, children absorb values in school that when brought home may cause conflicts.

Pre- and Post-Assessments

A pre-assessment and a post-assessment will be given to Bridging Cultures participating teachers. (See *Appendix A* and *Appendix B* for texts of the assessments.) These assessments are designed to give some information about how teachers construe cross-cultural conflicts *before* and *after* they participate in Bridging Cultures professional development activities. The assessments will be useful as one source of information about teachers' thoughts and perceptions, one that every teacher provides. More in-depth and individual perceptions will be revealed in the open-ended discussions and reflective writing in which each teacher is engaged.

Each assessment consists of four scenarios illustrating cross-cultural conflicts at school and at home that have been constructed from field observations by teachers and researchers. There are two school scenarios and two home scenarios in the pre-assessment and in the post-assessment.

The scenarios offer teachers a model for looking at events and experiences in their own classrooms. For each of the four scenarios, an open-ended question is posed ("What do you think the teacher should do?" "What do you think the mother should say?").

Thinking about the scenarios entails working at two levels-- the classroom level and the personal values level. On the one hand, teachers are ostensibly thinking about how to solve classroom conflicts; at the same time, they are likely examining (consciously or unconsciously) their own values and attitudes. While the assessments serve as our formal evaluation tool, we will look to the kinds of scenarios teachers generate from their own experience and from their reflections on these scenarios to inform us more deeply about their learning. Narrative reflection of this sort is particularly useful in exploring the often hidden values of culturally diverse children and families which may differ from those of the teacher.

Analyzing Teachers' Responses to the Assessments

Teachers' responses to the scenarios will be analyzed for themes that repeat themselves, either within a single teacher's writing or across teachers. These responses and presenting themes of the pre-assessment will be compared to those that are seen in performances on the post-assessment. We will, of course, be looking to see whether teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge they bring to interpretation of the scenarios have changed and, if so, how they have changed. Our own understanding of how collectivism and individualism play out in the classroom and at home will be enhanced by the teachers' responses, perhaps affecting how we frame the model itself.

Because three of the researchers have had extensive experience in using the scenarios with other teachers, in many different kinds of environments, they bring extensive awareness of the response possibilities. While there are no right or wrong answers to the scenario questions, answers do reveal the degree of understanding teachers have of how relatively more individualistic or collectivistic orientations influence life decisions and behaviors.

Participant Questionnaire

At the end of the pre-assessment session, teachers will complete a questionnaire that gives essential information about their education, teaching experience, language background, and the ethnic composition of their classrooms. This information will be helpful in understanding the perspectives the teachers bring to analyzing the scenarios on the pre- and post-assessments. Appendix C shows the full text of the questionnaire.

Appendix A

Bridging Cultures Pre-Assessment

Scenario # 1

A class of fifth grade students is working on posters in their art class. Next week some teachers will come to select five posters for an art show. Then, one poster will be chosen for a $50 prize. Erica and Victoria realize that they have some similar ideas for a really neat poster, and they want to work together.

What do you think the teacher should do?

Scenario #2

Danny tells his mother that he got the highest grade in the class on his math test. He says he is really proud of himself for doing so well, and for doing the best in the class.

What do you think his mother should say?

Scenario #3

It is the end of the school day, and the class is cleaning up. Salvador isn't feeling well, and he asks Emmanuel to help him with his job for the day which is cleaning the blackboard. Emmanuel isn't sure that he will have time to do both jobs.

What do you think the teacher should do?

Scenario #4

Adam and Johnny each got $20 from their mother. Johnny buys a T-shirt. A week later Adam wants to wear Johnny's T-shirt, and Johnny says, "This is my T-shirt, and I bought it with my own money." Adam says, "But you're not using this now."

What do you think the mother should do?

You have just finished responding to some scenarios from your own personal perspective as a teacher. Now we want you to role-play the part of a parent as you respond to the same scenarios again. Since our workshop is focusing on cross-cultural understanding, we are going to ask you to respond as you think members of different ethnic groups would.

Now will you please imagine yourself in the role of the typical Latino immigrant parent, as you respond to the same scenarios?

Scenario # 1

A class of fifth grade students is working on posters in their art class. Next week some teachers will come to select five posters for an art show. Then, one poster will be chosen for a $50 prize. Erica and Victoria realize that they have some similar ideas for a really neat poster, and they want to work together.

What do you think the teacher should do?

Scenario #2

Danny tells his mother that he got the highest grade in the class on his math test. He says he is really proud of himself for doing so well, and for doing the best in the class.

What do you think his mother should say?

Scenario #3

It is the end of the school day, and the class is cleaning up. Salvador isn't feeling well, and he asks Emmanuel to help him with his job for the day which is cleaning the blackboard. Emmanuel isn't sure that he will have time to do both jobs.

What do you think the teacher should do?

Scenario #4

Adam and Johnny each got $20 from their mother. Johnny buys a T-shirt. A week later Adam wants to wear Johnny's T-shirt, and Johnny says, "This is my T-shirt, and I bought it with my own money." Adam says, "But you're not using this now."

What do you think the mother should do?

Now will you please imagine yourself in the role of in the role of the typical Euro-American parent in responding to the same scenarios for the last time?

Scenario # 1

A class of fifth grade students is working on posters in their art class. Next week some teachers will come to select five posters for an art show. Then, one poster will be chosen for a $50 prize. Erica and Victoria realize that they have some similar ideas for a really neat poster, and they want to work together.

What do you think the teacher should do?

Scenario #2

Danny tells his mother that he got the highest grade in the class on his math test. He says he is really proud of himself for doing so well, and for doing the best in the class.

What do you think his mother should say?

Scenario #3

It is the end of the school day, and the class is cleaning up. Salvador isn't feeling well, and he asks Emmanuel to help him with his job for the day which is cleaning the blackboard. Emmanuel isn't sure that he will have time to do both jobs.

What do you think the teacher should do?

Scenario #4

Adam and Johnny each got $20 from their mother. Johnny buys a T-shirt. A week later Adam wants to wear Johnny's T-shirt, and Johnny says, "This is my T-shirt, and I bought it with my own money." Adam says, "But you're not using this now."

What do you think the mother should do?

Appendix B

Bridging Cultures Post-Assessment

In the post-assessment session, teachers will respond to the following scenarios and will be asked to take multiple perspectives as they did with the first set of scenarios (pre-test).

Scenario #5

Rita is the first one home in the afternoon. When her mother gets home at 7, she finds that Rita has not started cooking dinner yet. When she asks Rita why she didn't get dinner started, Rita says she wasn't hungry.

What do you think her mother should do?

Scenario #6

One of the fifth grade classes has been learning about different kinds of art and artists before they go on a field trip to an art museum. The class is looking at some copies of famous paintings. The teacher tells the class that each student has to say, individually, which painting they think is worth the most. Maria doesn't understand what to do, and while the other students are making their decisions, Cathy tries to explain it to her. The teacher notices that they are talking.

What do you think the teacher should do?

Scenario #7

Theresa tells the teacher that she will probably be absent tomorrow because her mother is sick, and she has to stay home to help take care of her brother.

What do you think the teacher should do?

Scenario #8

When Anna's and Jeremy's mother gets home, she finds that the house has been cleaned, and dinner is almost ready. She thanks them both for being so helpful. Jeremy says, "Why are you thanking her? I'm the one who did most of the work."

What should the mother do?

Bridging Cultures Participant Questionnaire

Name_____ Birth Date_____

Where was your mother born?

Where was your father born?

Where were you born?

How long have you lived in the United States?

What languages do you speak?

What is your primary language?

What is your ethnicity?

What is the school and district where you teach?

How long have you taught?

What grades have you taught?

What is the student population like in your school?

What grade are you teaching now?

How many students do you have in your classroom?

What is the ethnic composition of your students?

For any of the levels of education below that apply to you, write in the city and country where you went to school at each level.

Elementary	Secondary
Post-Secondary	College
Graduate Studies	Other (explain)

What are you hoping to gain from this project?

What questions or concerns do you have?